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General Assembly

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Fifty-ninth session
Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Organization of work

Note by the Chairman

1. The agenda items allocated by the General Assembly to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) for consideration are listed in document A/C.4/59/1. Background information on those items, including references to related documentation, is set out in the annotated preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-ninth session (A/59/100).[1]

2. The General Assembly, in rule 99, paragraph (b), of its rules of procedure, calls on each Main Committee to adopt a programme of work indicating, if possible, a target date for the conclusion of its work, the approximate dates of consideration of items and the number of meetings to be allocated for the consideration of each item.

3. The General Assembly decided that the fifty-ninth session should recess not later than Tuesday, 14 December 2004, and that, inter alia, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) should complete its work by Thursday, 11 November 2004 (see A/59/250, paras. 13 and 14).

4. To that end, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) may wish to consider adopting as a provisional guideline the approximate dates set out below for the consideration of the items on its agenda with the understanding that it may be revised periodically, as appropriate, according to the availability of related documents. The Committee will also combine consideration of specific items on its agenda in order to ensure full and efficient utilization of the conference facilities allocated to it. As indicated below, Conference Services has allocated 27 meetings to the Committee and it has urged the Committee to make every effort to complete its work within the allotted time. Should the Committee wish to change the dates for consideration of items, it would still have to work within the dates and times indicated below.

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Agenda items	*Dates for consideration*
Organization of work	30 September — a.m.
Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (item 20)	4 October — p.m. 5 October — p.m. 6 October — p.m. 7 October — p.m. 8 October — p.m.
Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (item 79)	
Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (item 80)	
Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (item 81)	
Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (item 82)	
International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (item 74)	11 October — a.m. 12 October — a.m. 13 October — a.m. 18 October — p.m.
Effects of atomic radiation (item 73)	14 October — a.m. 15 October — a.m.
Questions relating to information (item 78) [Programme 23, Public information (Programme planning (item 109))]	19 October — p.m. 20 October — p.m. 21 October — p.m.
Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (item 77)	25 October — a.m. 26 October — a.m. 27 October — a.m.
Assistance in mine action (item 22)	28 October — a.m. 29 October — a.m.
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (item 75)	1 November — p.m. 2 November — p.m. 4 November — p.m.
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (item 76)	8 November — a.m. 9 November — a.m. 10 November — a.m. 11 November — a.m.

5. In the preparation of the above timetable, the Chairman was guided by the following considerations:

(a) In accordance with established procedures and practices and bearing in mind the availability of documentation, the Committee may wish to hold one general debate covering agenda items 20, 79, 80, 81 and 82 and individual debates on agenda items 22, 73-78 and 109, on the understanding that draft resolutions and/or decisions will be considered separately;

(b) Pursuant to paragraph 4 (i) of section D of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, the item entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples" (item 20) has been allocated for annual consideration in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) as a whole;

(c) Representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories and petitioners will be heard as early as possible during the Committee's consideration of the related items;

(d) Pursuant to paragraph 4 (j) of section D of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, the item entitled "Assistance in mine action" has been allocated for consideration every other year in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee);

(e) The Assembly decided, on 17 September 2004, to allocate programme 23, Public information, under the item entitled "Programme planning" (item 109) to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee for review and action and for subsequent submission to the Fifth Committee for its consideration in the context of the overall strategic framework for the period 2006-2007.

6. Subject to the above provisional programme of work being acceptable to the Committee and in order to facilitate its work, the Chairman wishes to suggest that the list of speakers in the general debate covering agenda items 20, 79, 80, 81 and 82 be closed on Monday, 4 October, at 6 p.m. The Committee will take decisions relating to the general debates on the remaining items at the appropriate time.

7. The Chairman wishes also to draw attention to the decisions of the General Assembly on the organization of its work contained in document A/59/250, sections II.B to III.

8. Members are also requested to bear in mind the General Assembly's decision that morning and afternoon meetings should start promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., both for all plenary meetings and for meetings of the Main Committees during the fifty-ninth session. It was also decided that during the final two weeks of Ramadan, from 1 to 11 November 2004, when local time will be Eastern Standard Time, the hours of the plenary meetings and the meetings of the Main Committees should be from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 2.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. at the latest (see A/59/250, para. 16). Members' attention is also drawn to the Assembly's decision to waive at its fifty-ninth session the quorum required, under rule 108 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, for the Chairman to declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed (see A/59/250, para. 19).

9. In view of the limited number of meetings available to the Committee, it is suggested that the time limit for statements be set at 10 minutes, with the exception of statements made by the spokespersons of groups of delegations, which would be extended to 15 minutes.

10. In order to allow the distribution of prepared texts of statements made in the Committee to delegations, specialized agencies, observers, interpreters and record-writers, 300 copies are required. A minimum of 30 copies should be given in advance of delivery of the statement in order to help the Secretariat to provide the best possible service.

11. The list of documents submitted under the various agenda items allocated to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) is contained in document A/C.4/59/INF/1.

Notes

[1] For the final list of agenda items adopted by the General Assembly, see document A/59/251.